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*To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.*

SIR,  
I HAVE read with much pleasure and interest, two papers lately published in your Magazine, signed "A Reader." His sentiments entirely coincide with mine in respect to Sterne, whose affected sensibility I could never read, without thinking of the many unfeeling acts he has been guilty of; besides his whole writings are so very exceptionable that they cannot be read without feeling hurt that human nature is so depraved as to admire a book which is so unfit to be read. I have lately been reading a book entitled, "The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, author of Pamela, Clarissa, Sir Charles Grandison, &c. by Anna Lætitia Barbauld," and was much gratified to find my opinion of Sterne's writings was confirmed by an extract from a letter of Mr. Richardson's, to the Rev. Mr. Hildesley, Bishop of Sodor and Mann, including the sentiments of a young lady, part of which I shall take the liberty of extracting:

"Who is this Yorick? you are pleased to ask me. You cannot, I imagine, have looked into his books; execrable I cannot but call them, for I am told that the third and fourth volumes are worse, if possible, than the two first, which only I have had the patience to run through. One extenuating circumstance attends his works, that they are too gross to be inflaming. My daughter shall transcribe for me the sentiments of a young lady, as written to another lady, her friend in the country, on the publication of the two first volumes only:

"Happy are you in your retirement, where you read what books you choose; either for instruction or entertainment; but in this foolish town, we are obliged to read every foolish book that fashion renders prevalent in conversation, and I am horribly out of humour with the present taste, which makes people ashamed to own they have not read, what, if fashion did not authorise, they would with more reason blush to say they had read! Perhaps some polite person from London, may have forced this piece into your hands, but give it not a place in your library; let not Tristram Shandy be ranked

among the well chosen authors there. It is, indeed, a little book, and little are its merits, though great has been the writer's reward! Unaccountable wildness; whimsical digressions: comical incoherencies; uncommon indecencies; all with an air of novelty, has caught the reader's attention, and applause has flown from one to another, till it is almost singular to disapprove; even the bishops admire, and recompense his wit, though his own character as a clergyman seems much impeached by printing such gross and vulgar tales, as no decent mind can endure without extreme disgust! Yet I will do him justice, and, if forced by friends, or led by curiosity, you have read, and laughed, and almost cried at Tristram, I will agree with you that there is subject for mirth, and some affecting strokes. Yorick, Uncle Toby, and Trim are admirably characterised, and very interesting, and an excellent sermon of a peculiar kind, on conscience, is introduced; and I most admire the author for his judgment in seeing the town's folly in the extravagant praises and favour's heaped on him; for he says, he passed unnoticed by the world till he put on a fool's coat, and since that every body admires him!

"But mark my prophecy, that by another season, this performance will be as much decried, as it is now extolled; for it has not intrinsic merit sufficient to prevent its sinking, when no longer upheld by the short lived breath of fashion: and yet another prophecy I utter, that this ridiculous compound will be the cause of many more productions, witless and humourless, perhaps, but indecent and absurd, till the town will be punished for undue encouragement, by being poisoned with disgusting nonsense."

While I am on this subject, I beg you will also allow me to remark how much injury has been done to society from some of Miss Owenson's works, particularly the "Lay of an Irish Harp," in which I am sorry to say she has departed from that delicacy of feeling, which ought so peculiarly to mark the female character. Her late novel, "Woman, or Ida of Athens," was so excellently criticized in your Magazine, I wish the Reviewer had

mentioned with disapprobation, as a most objectionable part, the coquetry and studying of attitudes, of which all Miss Owenson's heroines are so fond, as I hope that *some* of the female sex are superior to such things.

A LOVER OF SIMPLICITY OF CHARACTER.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

ON MORALITY.

—“ Say, Reason, say,  
When shall thy long minority expire ?  
When shall thy dilatory kingdom come ?  
Weak are the outward checks, that would supply,  
Thy bridle's place, within the secret heart.  
The *pigmy Rapine*, whose invasions vex,  
The *private scene*, that hides his head minute,  
From human justice, it is thine to end:  
And thine, the *Titan-crimes*, that lift to heaven,  
Their blushless fronts, and laugh at laws.”

FAWCETT'S CIVILIZED WAR.

I writing on the subject of morals, it will be unavoidable not to bring into view how far they are influenced by the political institutions which exist among us, or not to express a wish that more of the exertions of legislators were turned towards introducing a correct morality, through the means of an enlightened system of legislation, especially directed to this point. Good laws would do much, good examples in the higher and middling classes would do more towards introducing this correct system through all the various classes of the community, beginning at the higher ranks, and extending through all the gradations of society. Dr. Johnson, in an advanced period of his life, on being asked whether he had found mankind better or worse than he had formed his expectations on entering into the world, answered, “ he had found them less just, but more benevolent.” We are frequently the creatures of surrounding circumstances, and many from the pressure of adversity, have had their moral principle undermined. “ My poverty, but not my will consents,” is not a valid plea for the errors of the poor, but yet it may be allowed to go in mitigation of a rigorous condemnation. I have often with heartfelt satisfaction observed the latter part

of Dr. Johnson's remark exemplified, in perceiving that benevolence is a quality more frequently found in human nature than the misanthrope may be willing to allow. It may be sometimes nearly smothered, but it often revives, and few hearts are insensible to its delicate touches.

A very great error lies in laying too much stress on the ceremonials of religion, while the essence of religion, that great principle, which according to the radical meaning of the word (from the Latin verb *religare* to bind or fasten) binds man to man, is too much neglected. Morality, that duty which man owes to himself, and his neighbour must be inseparably linked with the duty he owes to his God.

The importance of morality must be acknowledged by all classes. It forms the principal security for our comfortable enjoyment of life, as much of the unhappiness existing in the world proceeds from a relaxed system of morals. In this state interests clash, and the passions of ourselves and others disturb our quiet. One person, or a few departing from the dictates of a correct morality, produce similar actions in others. Vice has a tendency to introduce a re-action. If I am injured by my neighbour, and irritation succeeds, or retaliation follows; at every step, in this race of error, we get farther from the course of rectitude, until from the invasions of pigmy rapine, great crimes follow as the certain consequence. Morality is the very essence of religion, it is the practical exemplification of our duty to God and man, and affords the legislator the best sanction for the scrupulous fulfilment of the laws of justice. K.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

ON SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, AND PARTIES.

FROM the notice often taken of your work, and particularly of your Political Retrospect, I find you offend the timid and time-serving. But persevere and probably the voice of the People will soon be with you. The late investigation in the House of Commons has done much to open the eyes of the people of England, as evinced by the proceedings of the cities of London, Westminster, and other places.